

CLAIMS

What is claimed:

1. A method for identifying a runaway software agent operating in a computer system, said method comprising:
 - 5 defining a time window for said agent;
 - receiving a current time signal;
 - determining a start time for said agent, said start time denoting when said agent began operating in said system;
 - determining if said time window is exceeded using said start time and said current time; and
 - 10 identifying said agent if said time window is exceeded, said identifying includes identifying said agent as a runaway agent.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said time window includes an operating time limit for said agent.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said time window includes a starting event
15 associated with said agent.
4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - determining if another agent relies on said agent if said agent is a runaway agent; and
 - notifying said another agent relying on said runaway agent.
- 20 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - providing information about said agent to a user interface.
6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - terminating said agent if said agent is identified.

7. The method of claim 5, further comprising:
allowing a user to specify a ranking for said agent.
8. A method for identifying a runaway software agent operating in an HTTP
environment on a computer system coupled to a communications network, said
5 method comprising:
identifying a thread associated with said HTTP environment using a
thread identifier;
initiating an agent from said thread;
defining a time window associated with said agent;
10 obtaining a start time for said agent on said thread;
receiving a current time signal; and
determining if said time window is exceeded using said start time and said
current time signal.
9. The method of claim 8, further comprising:
15 identifying said agent as a runaway agent if said time window is exceeded.
10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
providing said runaway agent to a display device.
11. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
ranking said agent against a plurality of other runaway agents associated
20 with said computer system.
12. The method of claim 10, further comprising:
performing a corrective action on said runaway agent.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein said corrective action is performed by a user.
14. The method of claim 12, wherein said corrective action is performed by said system.
- 5 15. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
specifying a set of ranking criteria for said runaway agent using a user interface.
- 10 16. The method of claim 15, wherein said ranking further comprises fatal, failure, high warning and low warning.
17. A method for managing a plurality of software agents operating in a computer system, said method comprising the steps of:
defining a time window for said plurality of agents;
15 identifying at least one of said plurality of agents exceeding said time window to produce an identified set;
filtering said identified set according to predetermined filtering parameters;
ordering said agents within said identified set; and
20 displaying said identified set, thereby managing the plurality of software agents operating in the computer system.
18. The method of claim 17, wherein said ordering step produces a rank ordered list of said agents in said identified set.
19. The method of claim 17, wherein said filtering parameters are defined by a user.
- 25 20. The method of claim 17, further comprising:

identifying members of said identified set having a thread associated therewith to produce a thread set.

21. A computer program product having machine-readable instructions provided thereon for instructing a processor to perform a method for identifying a software agent operating in a computer system, said computer program product comprising:
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- instructions for defining a time window associated with said agent;
 - instructions for receiving a current time signal;
 - instructions for determining a start time for said agent;
 - 10 determining if said time window has been exceeded using said start time and said current time; and
 - instructions for flagging said agent as a runaway agent if said time window is exceeded.
- 15 22. The method of claim 21, wherein said time window includes an operating time limit for said agent.
23. The method of claim 21, further comprising:
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- providing information about said agent to a user interface.
24. The method of claim 21, further comprising:
- terminating said agent if said agent is identified.